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THE HARPER.

The *old* Irish harp has now, perhaps, no existence, unless in the repositories of the curious. It has passed away, among many other interesting relics of earlier times, which had yet a lingering existence at the close of the last century. Any one who can look back distinctly for about thirty years, may chance to have some recollection of the travelling harper; at that time, of course, in the wane of life and social consideration. Prior to this, and in a much simpler state of society, he was an honoured guest, whose appearance never failed to produce much animated excitement wherever he came, laden with the music, the provincial intelligence and the family gossip, amassed during half a year or more of tuneful peregrination.

The writer can vividly, though, perhaps, not with very great accuracy, recall the personal appearance of a very old man named Frene or Freney, who was, something more than thirty years since, a welcome visitor in every respectable family, through many of the western counties. Frene could not then have been less than ninety years old. He was about the middle size, but much bent by age; with a head of the Homeric cast, and venerably crowned with the whitest hair. His harp, as the writer—then a child—can recollect its appearance, was a dark framed, antique looking instrument, closely strung with thin brass wires, which produced that wild, low, ringing music, which, in the following stanzas, is attempted to be expressed by the words “fairy chime.” The effect of this was heightened by the old man’s peculiar expression of intense, and sometimes pleased attention to his own music, as he stooped forward, holding his head close to the wires, while he swept them over with a feeble, uncertain, and trembling hand—the too obvious effect of extreme age. His appearance thus bowed beside the instrument, which (though as the writer is informed, it was a small harp,) towered far above his white head—was of the most picturesque character, and might well have served to illustrate the description of his more poetic brother in the “Lay.” But poor old Frene had no rallying of tuneful power—his harp-strings seemed to have caught the wandering, querulous, and feeble dotage of his infirm age, and echoed mournfully of departed power and life. And it now adds much to the interest of this recollection, that he could not have been the welcome guest, which at this time he was, for the sake of his music. He was a venerable ruin of those good old times, which their then survivors felt to be passing away with the harper. Old Frene had lived among their grandfathers, and had filled no mean place in the gay doings of those less refined, but more joyous and hospitable times. He was full of old stories about persons, whose names and deeds had still an interest in the memory of their descendants; and these stories were heard with a delight which can now be little understood. They excited that sympathy, which is the effect of similar habits and feelings; and the world has long ceased to look with congenial interest on the half barbaric heroism and hospitality of that masculine generation, of which there now remains scarcely a distinct recollection. It will hardly be necessary to inform the intelligent reader of the following poem, that it refers to the harp and harper of an earlier period—O’Connellan, whose history is briefly given in a former number.

O’CONNELLAN’S HARP.

Harp so loved in days of old,
Unhonored now—
The hand that swept thy strings, is cold,
And tuneless thou!
Thou’ oft, when other sounds are still
In evening grey,
The peasant carols on the hill
Thy plaintive lay;
But, never more those chords of thine
Shall vibrate there—
No more, with silvery splendour shine
Thro’ evening air:
Nor maiden watch the minstrel pace,
His honored path,—
Who looks for him—alas! must trace,
The tomb-crowned rath!
By Lough Gur’s waters, lone and low,
The minstrel’s laid—
Where mouldering cloisters dimly throw
Sepulchral shade:

Where clustering ivy darkly weeps
Upon his bed,
To blot the legend where he sleeps—
The tuneful Dead!
And fall’n are the towers of time
In dust, and lone,
Where the ringing of his fairy chime
So well was known!
Where song was sweet and mirth was high,
And beauty smiled—
Thro’ roofless halls the night winds sigh,
The owl shrieks wild!

The towers are fall’n—and where are they
Who met of yore,
To listen to the minstrel’s lay
Or knightly lore!
The castle lifts its broken pile
In silent air—
And answers with a gloomy smile
That such things were!
Still cherished lives to distant years,
The minstrel’s name—
An honor’d relic still appears
The Clairseach’s frame—
Tho’ in the shroud of ruin it lie,
By time unstrung—
Its soul of music, may not die—
The strains it sung!

J. U. U.

THE GEOLOGY OF DUBLIN AND ITS SUBURBS.

(Concluded from p. 128.)

Having disposed in this rapid and very imperfect sketch of those objects to the south of the Dodder, which claim the attention of the geologist, we shall now pass to the more recent formations on which the metropolis is situate, and which are found upon its northern and western sides.

Dublin is built upon a great alluvial deposit of sand, clay, and gravel, whose depth is various in different parts of the city. In some places, as, for example, Castle-street and High-street, after sinking to a certain depth, peat has been encountered, which, when dried, has afforded a very excellent turf. This curious fact was first publicly announced in a letter lately addressed by Philip Molloy, Esq. of Merrion square, to the secretary of the Geological Society of Dublin. When this alluvial bank is pierced through, a stone of a peculiar kind is met with denominated calpe, a term first applied to it by our celebrated countryman, Mr. Kirvan. This calpe has a close fracture, a very dark colour, and is very generally intersected with veins of hornstone and calcareous spar. Besides carbonate of limo it includes considerable quantities of silex and alumen, traces of the oxides of iron and manganese, and an appreciable per centage of free carbon, to which its colour is due. It is in fact a rock intermediate between limestone and claystone, and has by some geologists been considered as arising from an intimate admixture of both. In consequence of the amount of foreign earths and oxides which it includes, this stone does not admit of being burned into lime. It is also extremely ill adapted to the purposes of building, for, by exposure to air and moisture, it becomes soft and friable, and undergoes a very rapid disintegration, a fact unfortunately too well attested by the dilapidated exteriors of some of our public buildings. To the geologists, however, it is particularly interesting, being a stone of a very characteristic composition, and one almost peculiar to Dublin and its vicinity. In this district it alternates with beds of limestone of remarkably dark colour, and which frequently include fully ten per cent. of silex. It is also frequently studded with cubical crystals of iron pyrites, and associated with thin strata of slate clay, containing imbedded spheroidal masses of a species of clay iron stone, a substance which, when burned and mixed with quick lime, affords a cement capable of setting under water. These different beds, were it not that they are obviously a part of a very extended formation which exhibits elsewhere far different characters, might be fairly classified with the earlier calcareous rocks; for, like these, they are, as far as the observation of the writer goes, almost entirely destitute of animal or vegetable fossils. In this particular how strikingly are they distinguished from the Kildare limestone, brought into the city by the Grand Canal, which appears to be little more than an aggregation of